

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-04-2008		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Interoperability Issues in Noncombatant Evacuation Operations				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Paul C. de Marcellus Paper Advisor (if Any): William Hartig				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Noncombatant evacuation operations are high profile events that are crucial to the credibility of the United States. Due to their political nature, the responsibility for the evacuation lies with the Department of State. For this reason, unity of effort is achieved through cooperation and not through unity of command. Interoperability, a key factor in the command structure of any military effort, is of profound importance in operations that attempt to achieve unity of effort across Departmental boundaries through cooperation. In past noncombatant evacuation operations and, particularly in the 2006 evacuation of Lebanon, the operational function of command and control and more precisely, simple interoperability continues to be the Achilles Heel for noncombatant evacuation operations. Difficulties stemming from interoperability do not arise during training due to the manner in which the Department of Defense and Department of State train. In order to avoid potential future failures, these entities must change their training practices.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS NEO, Noncombatant Evacuation Operation, Lebanon, Unity of Effort, Command and Control, Interoperability, Interagency					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 16	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

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Interoperability Issues in Noncombatant Evacuation Operations

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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23 April2008

Abstract

Noncombatant evacuation operations are high profile events that are crucial to the credibility of the United States. Due to their political nature, the responsibility for the evacuation lies with the Department of State. For this reason, unity of effort is achieved through cooperation and not through unity of command. Interoperability, a key factor in the command structure of any military effort, is of profound importance in operations that attempt to achieve unity of effort across Departmental boundaries through cooperation. In past noncombatant evacuation operations and, particularly in the 2006 evacuation of Lebanon, the operational function of command and control and more precisely, simple interoperability continues to be the Achilles Heel for noncombatant evacuation operations. Difficulties stemming from interoperability do not arise during training due to the manner in which the Department of Defense and Department of State train. In order to avoid potential future failures, these entities must change their training practices.

On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah guerillas fired rockets into Northern Israel and successfully captured two Israeli soldiers who were patrolling the border, prompting a major military offensive by Israel.¹ This event was the first in a cascade of falling dominoes that set into motion a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) of unprecedented scope. As the situation in Lebanon continued to deteriorate, the world's attention turned toward the plight of those trying to flee Lebanon and to the efforts of those governments trying to get them out. As thousands of members of the U.S. and other armed forces rushed to the assistance of the Ambassador of Lebanon and his staff, particular great interest was paid to the role and military capabilities of the United States. When all was said and done, over 15,000 noncombatants were evacuated, the largest overseas evacuation since World War II.² While the mission was certainly a success, the evacuation once again highlighted the unique challenges that are inherent in every noncombatant evacuation operation and demonstrated the need for change.

These unique challenges are a natural, if unintended, byproduct of the interagency nature of noncombatant evacuation operations. Noncombatant evacuation is, at its core, both a military operation and a political statement. While the preponderance of planners, executors, and physical assets are from the Department of Defense, it is the Ambassador and not the Combatant Commander who holds the final responsibility for evacuation.³ Because of this, unity of effort in noncombatant evacuation operations is achieved through cooperation.

¹ Greg Myre and Steven Erlanger, "Israeli Forces Enter Lebanon after 2 Soldiers Are Seized," *New York Times*, 12 July 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed 30 March 2008).

² Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, *Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO): Lessons and Observations from the NEO of the American Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon, conducted by 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), 15 July-20 August, 2006 (U)*, 06 February 2007, 6, <http://www3.gsf.hq.pacom.smil.mil/> (accessed 27 March 2008). (Unclassified/For Official Use Only)

³ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 January 2007), I-2.

In *Joint Operational Warfare*, Dr. Milan Vego posits that interoperability is one of three main “requirements for the sound functioning of a command organization.”⁴ While interoperability is fundamental to any military effort, it is of profound importance in operations that attempt to achieve unity of effort across Departmental boundaries through cooperation. Past noncombatant evacuations, and particularly the most recent 2006 evacuation of Lebanon, serve as illustrative examples of these unique operational Command and Control (C2) challenges. These examples demonstrate that though our military has greatly improved its capability and responsiveness regarding the physical tasks of safely evacuating personnel, the operational function of command and control and more precisely, simple interoperability continues to be the Achilles Heel for noncombatant evacuation operations.

In order to examine interoperability, it is helpful to consider the concept as Doctor Vego conceives it in order to establish a cognitive point of departure. According to Vego, interoperability is “the capability of systems, units, or forces to provide and accept services from other systems, units, or forces and to use the services so exchanged to enable them to operate effectively together.”⁵ He stresses, however, that the term is broader, encapsulating the degree of friction that is caused by differences in less tangible elements such as “doctrine, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and special operating procedures.”⁶ Even in Governmental Department cultures, specialized languages and knowledge of each other’s capabilities and processes must be included in Vego’s definition. Although the United States military has truly embraced jointness, it has repeatedly discovered that interoperability remains a challenge. Between Governmental Departments participating in noncombatant evacuation operations, we shall see that it is the challenge.

⁴ Milan N. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2007), VIII-8.

⁵ Ibid, VIII-9.

⁶ Ibid.

While noncombatant evacuation operations frequently involve a large cast of organizations, the two major roles are played by the Department of Defense and the Department of State. The Department of State's responsibility for evacuations is prescribed by law in the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986:

The Secretary of State shall develop and implement policies and programs to provide for the safe and efficient evacuation of United States Government personnel, dependents, and private United States citizens when their lives are endangered. Such policies shall include measures to identify high risk areas where evacuation may be necessary....⁷

It is important to understand why the Department of State must be ultimately responsible during noncombatant evacuations, utilizing unity of effort through cooperation as opposed to a military officer being in charge and exercising directive command. Evacuations are conducted when the safety of Americans abroad is in jeopardy due either to natural disasters, as in the evacuation of parts of the Philippines in 1991 in the wake of the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, or to political strife. As stated earlier, noncombatant evacuation is a Department of State responsibility, and in the case of political strife, it is all the more so a political decision. An Ambassador's decision to evacuate American citizens communicates to the host government and to the world a resounding message. This message is a clear lack of confidence in that state's ability to protect American citizens or to retain the norms of statehood.⁸ This action may even contribute to, or accelerate, the deterioration of the particular situation. For this reason, evacuation is delayed until as late as possible and is generally performed in incremental stages; beginning with the recommendation that American citizens make arrangements to depart by

⁷ *Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act, U.S. Code*, vol. 22, sec. 4802 (1986).

⁸ Secretary of State to Secretary of Defense, Memorandum Of Agreement Between the Departments of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Nationals and Designated Other Persons From Threatened Areas Overseas, July 1998.

commercial means, progressing to an ordering of the departure of dependants of Embassy personnel, and ending with (if necessary) the closing of the Embassy. Each stage is a window into the Ambassador's personal assessment of the host nation's health. In order to minimize the political and social impact of an evacuation, commercial means of transport are greatly preferred. Typically, it is only when the commercial means are no longer viable that the assistance of the military is requested. Even after the military arrives, the visibility, footprint, degree of involvement, ROE, and military equipment physically needed for security and transport are further potential destabilizing influences in an already tenuous situation. This is captured in guidance from Joint Publication 3-68, *Noncombatant*

Evacuation Operations:

The ambassador should summarize the political objectives and constraints relevant to the JTF's assistance, the nuances involved, and any constraints on the use of force that might be appropriate. While these may be obvious to those intimately involved with the situation, the JFC will be better prepared to comply effectively with a request for help if the reasons have been clearly explained.⁹

The statement above describes an integral relationship between the Department of State and the Department of Defense in which interoperability is fundamental.

It might be argued that the safe evacuation of 15,000 noncombatants from a crisis area, in and of itself, demonstrates that the Department of Defense and Department of State are, in fact, able to effectively coordinate actions. Subscribing to this point of view, the Department of State Assistant Secretary for Resource Management and Chief Financial Officer remarked in the State Department's response to the Government Accountability Office's 08-23 Congressional Report, "*Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved:*"

⁹ JP 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, IV-8.

With decades of experience managing successful evacuations with DoD, the State Department feels that the two agencies in fact have a clear idea of each other's capabilities and organizational cultures.

Certainly, both Departments have made significant advances, but an analysis of the evacuation of Lebanon and past evacuations brings to light numerous areas where Department of Defense and Department of State did not understand each other's capabilities or organizational cultures.

In order to successfully execute a NEO, a mutual understanding of capabilities is essential. During Operation Eastern Exit, the 1991 evacuation of the American Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, the pilots of the Marine Corps CH-53E helicopters, who had been flying through the night for hours, found themselves circling an unfriendly city looking for a landing zone (LZ) that they assumed the embassy knew how to prepare.¹⁰ Further, they thought that the embassy personnel would be able to provide terminal guidance to the LZ. In reality, the radio operator at the Embassy was in an interior room with no windows and was capable only of sending a runner outside to wave a flag at the LZ site.¹¹ As the evacuees finally started making their way out to the helicopters, the loading aircrew realized that the Embassy had improperly organized the evacuees, as they were unaware of the passenger capacity of the CH-53E.¹² This resulted in unnecessary exposure of evacuees to the surrounding threat.¹³

In Lebanon, 16 years later, the understanding of capabilities would again be a source of friction. The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Lessons Learned reports that:

¹⁰ Adam B. Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, April 1972), 26.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

U.S.embassy personnel and DOS representatives were not familiar with the capabilities that a MEU could employ in support of a NEO. An impromptu education process was required before the capabilities of the MEU were understood by the embassy staff.¹⁴

The Department of State concedes this point in its All-Post Cable entitled “*Large-Scale Evacuations: Consular Lessons Learned.*”¹⁵ The capabilities of the Department of Defense (beyond the evacuating force) were also not readily apparent to the Department of State. Normally, the Department of State’s Bureau of Administration is responsible for chartering transportation for evacuees.¹⁶ United States European Command’s (USEUCOM) lessons learned observes that this bureau’s C2 capability was not able to handle the volume of transportation coordination needed for an evacuation of Lebanon’s scale.¹⁷ The report went on to indicate that the task should have been delegated to a military organization with this core competency, specifically United States Transportation Command.¹⁸ The United States Government Accountability Office suggests that the Memorandum of Agreement between the Departments of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens (hereafter referred to as the “MOA”) should establish a threshold that clearly delineates the responsibility for transportation and at what point that responsibility is shifted from Department of State to Department of Defense.¹⁹ As may have been predicted, in the absence of such guidance, both the Department of State and the Department of Defense were simultaneously attempting to negotiate contracts. By competing for aircraft resources that

¹⁴ Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, *Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations*, 9.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State to all diplomatic and consular posts, message 132149Z MAR 07, 13 March 2007.

¹⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved* (Washington, DC: GAO 2008), 10.

¹⁷ “Command and Control- Joint and Interagency During the Lebanon NEO.” (U) ID 12181-11674. March 2007. Unclassified. USEUCOM Lessons Learned Database. SIPRNET: <http://portal.hqusaureur.army.smil.mil/>. Stuttgart, Germany: US European Command. (Accessed 27 March 2008). (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: The July 2006 Evacuation of American Citizens from Lebanon* (Washington, DC: GAO 2007), 9.

were already scarce due to the height of the tourist season, this confusion exaggerated the impression of a shortage and drove up prices.²⁰

Other military capabilities that were perhaps not clearly understood but certainly underutilized were the MEU's Human Intelligence Exploitation Teams (HET). It was decided by the U. S. Embassy that in order to maintain a low military profile, only Embassy personnel would be permitted to talk to American citizens arriving from the southern hot-spots of Lebanon²¹. Ultimately, information regarding actions in the South was fortunately not needed. The MEU commander, however, was deprived of a great deal of intelligence that likely would have improved decision-making had missions to extract American citizens from the South been required.²²

Cultural differences between the two Departments also resulted in unfortunate challenges in Lebanon. The cultural differences ranged from something as simple as confusion over the use of military time (1600 versus 4PM) to understanding each other's internal rank structures and the responsibilities associated with those ranks or positions.²³ Throughout the crisis in Lebanon there were frequent incidents of personnel trying to get information or services from the wrong source. Organizational cultures were also at odds with respect to requests for assistance. When the military receives requests for assistance, it prefers that requests be expressed in terms of specific requirements. In Lebanon, the Department of State frequently issued its requests in terms of assets.²⁴ Also of note was the fact that in the Department of State, the utilization of formal oral orders is common, whereas

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, *Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations*, 13.

²² Ibid.

²³ U.S. Department of State to all diplomatic and consular posts, message 082334Z JAN 07, 08 January 2007.

²⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: The July 2006 Evacuation of American Citizens from Lebanon* (Washington, DC: GAO 2007), 8.

the Department of Defense communicates final military orders in writing.²⁵ These cultural differences can and did lead to convoluted information pathways. During the 2003 evacuation of Incirlik, Turkey, “Much of USAFE’s [*United States Air Forces in Europe*] early planning efforts were centered on finding ways to circumvent the unresponsive and cumbersome formal coordination process between USEUCOM and DOS.”²⁶ In Turkey and, later, in Lebanon, these communication structures resulted in countless duplicative requests for information.

Past noncombatant evacuation operations also demonstrated that equipment and system incompatibilities were yet another threat to interoperability and ultimately to mission success. In the earlier mentioned evacuation of Mogadishu, Somalia, the military and the Embassy did not have common cryptologic material and, therefore, had no direct secure communication link between them.²⁷ In Turkey, the NEO Tracking system developed by Defense Manpower Data Center was not capable of automatically accepting civil servant information.²⁸ The Lebanese NEO had similar challenges. The military’s heavy reliance on Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) and its tendency to over-classify information bogged down information sharing as Department of Defense and Department of State used data systems with different classification levels.²⁹ This was especially crippling

²⁵ U. S. European Command Center for Lessons Learned, *Levant Interagency After-Action Review (U)*, 16 October 2006, <http://www3.gsf.hq.pacom.smil.mil/> (accessed 27 March 2008). (Unclassified/For Official Use Only).

²⁶ U. S. European Command Center for Lessons Learned, *Evacuation Operations (U)*, 06 October 2003, <http://www.jllis.smil.mil/> (accessed 27 March 2008). (Unclassified).

²⁷ Adam B. Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991*, vi.

²⁸ U. S. European Command Center for Lessons Learned, *Evacuation Operations (U)*.

²⁹ U. S. European Command Center for Lessons Learned, *Levant Interagency After-Action Review (U)*.

when it came to sharing information with other agencies (e.g., United States Agency for International Development) and foreign militaries.³⁰

These interoperability problems, by themselves, may seem to be rather innocuous. When they are combined with the major logistic challenges of an evacuation in an extremely time sensitive environment, however, the problems may become deadly. If this is the case, why aren't these issues identified?

There are a number of reasons why unity of effort through cooperation in NEOs is repeatedly plagued by issues of interoperability. Some of the reasons for this deficiency reside in the way the Departments train. For instance, Marine Expeditionary Units are required to conduct noncombatant evacuation training exercises prior to deployment and must include Department of State personnel in the scenario. It must be noted, however, that these Department of State personnel are simple representatives, not actual Ambassadors with their staffs; thus, the training, while certainly valuable to the MEU, fails to address real issues of interoperability for two main reasons. First, the evaluation obviously trains only one of the two partners that would be in an actual NEO. The MEU gains experience but the Ambassadors and their staffs do not. Second, since the Department of State participation is somewhat artificial, not using staffs, equipment, or products that are representative of an actual embassy, many issues that would come up in actual noncombatant evacuation operation, such as compatibility of systems and networks or the exchange of information, remain hidden during training. The only way to truly understand these issues would be to have the MEU conduct the exercise with an actual Embassy. Unfortunately, an Ambassador practicing a noncombatant evacuation with the military in a troubled country could likely

³⁰ CAPT William Snyder, (Chief Staff Officer, CTF63), interview by author, 04 April 2008.

have grave repercussions, sending a message of “no confidence” to that government, and possibly catalyzing the failure of that state.

With regard to the Department of State, there are three major tools used to train Embassy staffs on crisis management, but they too do not provide much relief regarding issues of interoperability. First, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) trains Embassy personnel prior to their assignment to posts overseas, but the training is not standardized and its education and training on evacuations provides little more than a quick overview.³¹ Second, Crisis Management Exercises (CME) are typically two-day affairs conducted by FSI at each post and scheduled anywhere from every year to every 2 ½ years.³² These exercises are clearly beneficial, but are likewise subject to the same limitations as the MEU training described earlier. Third, the Emergency Planning Handbook, the primary guidance available in an Embassy for an emergency, is reported by Embassies as being “too generic, voluminous, and not particularly useful in preparing for the possibility of evacuation.”³³

Perhaps even more fundamental than training to these persistent interoperability issues is how we document the issues themselves. Joint Publication 3-68 states that after an evacuation involving Department of Defense resources or personnel, the Combatant Commander must “provide the SecDef with an after action report containing a summary of the activities and recommendations for improving future operations.”³⁴ However, there is no central collection point for these reports. Worse still, the majority of these (predominantly unclassified) reports reside on the SIPRNET, further limiting their availability and utility. The Department of State’s lack of documenting lessons learned is even more egregious.

³¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved* (Washington, DC: GAO 2008), 24.

³² Ibid, 22.

³³ Ibid, 3.

³⁴ JP 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, III-6.

While there is a requirement that all Embassies create an after-action report containing lessons learned for their evacuations, over 50 percent of all the embassies that have conducted an evacuation in the last five years have failed to do so.³⁵ Hand-in-hand with this is the fact that there is no entity at the Department of State responsible for ensuring that those reports that are created are collected, analyzed, and disseminated.³⁶ As a result, Ambassadors and their staffs do not benefit from the “decades of experience managing successful evacuations with DoD” referred to earlier.

Exacerbating these issues is that, like the military, the Department of State’s manpower policy is to rotate personnel through posts every one to three years.³⁷ The posts that are considered to be the most dangerous (and most prone to being evacuated) have the shortest (one year) rotations and are typically filled by the most junior personnel with the least experience.³⁸ This translates into the sobering fact that the Embassies of the countries most likely to require a noncombatant evacuation are manned by a staff that has had little time to familiarize itself with its own Emergency Action Plan, has comparatively little experience, and has possibly never conducted a CME. It could be said that the Washington Liaison Group (WLG) and Regional Liaison Groups (RLG), established by the aforementioned MOA, were created precisely to ensure effective cooperation. In truth, the WLG, which is nominally responsible for “the coordination and implementation at the national level of all emergency and evacuation plans by the Departments of State and Defense and by other U.S. Government agencies as appropriate,” is not capable of

³⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved* (Washington, DC: GAO 2008), 27.

³⁶ Ibid, 27.

³⁷ Ibid, 31.

³⁸ Ibid.

anticipating or correcting the majority of interoperability issues. It is not hard to see from this collection of issues that there is a grave need for both Departments to make changes.

One change recommended by Stephen Dingbaum in his paper, “*Unity of Effort During Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*,” is that the “regional CINCs [sic] should send survey teams to “walk the ground” in the twenty or so countries worldwide where evacuations are most likely to occur.”³⁹ If that is not possible he suggests that the MEUs “send the Military Support and Liaison Teams to the four or five countries in their area of operations where they would most likely be called upon to conduct evacuation operations.”⁴⁰ These options, while helpful in that Department of Defense personnel would be able to liaise with Embassies prior to a crisis, only bear fruit if the country that will require the NEO is correctly identified and the Ambassador is willing to permit them to conduct the training. Also absent is an institutional memory including lessons learned from previous NEOs. The Levant Interagency After-Action Review, a video-teleconference between senior Department of State and Department of Defense personnel conducted in October 2006, advocated the need for improving our corporate knowledge and using on-scene State Department Liaison Officers to improve and streamline interagency coordination.⁴¹

These needs could instead be captured through changes to the RLG. Currently, the Memorandum of Agreement and Joint Publication 3-68 provide for the establishment of the RLGs by the WLG “as are advisable.”⁴² Although some NEOs are the result of a slowly building crisis, often they are the result of very rapidly deteriorating situations. The value of such a group is greatly diminished by the ad-hoc nature and the lack of time for the members

³⁹ Stephen D. Dingbaum, “Unity of Effort During Noncombatant Evacuation Operations” (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 1998), 17.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ U. S. European Command Center for Lessons Learned, *Levant Interagency After-Action Review (U)*.

⁴² JP 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, II-2.

of this group to establish a working relationship or situational expertise. The RLG would be much more effective as a standing organization that is the expert not only on evacuations, but also the likely participants from the Department of State and the Department of Defense that may be involved. A standing RLG, one for each Geographic Combatant Commander, could perform the following tasks:

- Specialize in evacuations, review past NEOs in their region.
- Maintain close ties with region's Ambassadors and use evacuation specialty to provide assistance refining the posts' EAPs.
- Maintain close ties with military units (particularly MEUs) as they enter into the area providing them with assistance in finding Embassy specific information and reviewing recurring issues.
- In the event of a crisis, travel to the Embassy and perform the traditional duties of an RLG, but now on scene with specialized knowledge of both the mission and the particular area.

Unfortunately, the areas of responsibility for the RLGs, as set out in the Memorandum of Agreement, do not coincide with the Unified Command Plan's designated areas of responsibility for the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC).⁴³ These areas of responsibility should be changed so that GCCs and RLGs are responsible for the same physical area.

A second recommendation is the establishment of an entity that would be responsible for ensuring the production, analysis, and distribution of NEO lessons learned at the Department of State. Ideally, this organization would be part of the FSI so that it could be equipped with the most up-to-date information when it conducts its training of personnel on their way out to posts and to the posts themselves in the CMEs. Additionally, the Department of Defense must not only ensure that after-action reports are completed but also incorporated, with Department of State lessons learned, into a single repository of knowledge

⁴³ Secretary of State to Secretary of Defense, Memorandum Of Agreement Between the Departments of State and Defense on the Protection and Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Nationals and Designated Other Persons From Threatened Areas Overseas, July 1998.

that is easily accessible to Department of Defense and Department of State alike. From this repository, FSI and MEU exercise planners could continually update and refine training scenarios, providing future NEO participants with a much more accurate and comprehensive picture of the challenges they will face. As historical trends show that it is only a matter of time before this nation is once again involved in an evacuation, both Departments equally share the responsibility to ensure future success.

While success in this arena may receive only nominal external notice, failure guarantees global attention. With every NEO, the credibility of the United States is at stake, to say nothing of American lives. Both foreign entities and U. S. citizens have come to expect that the United States, the most powerful nation in the world, is capable of protecting its own. Furthermore, since we have historically provided evacuation services to Third Country Nationals, the capability for NEO is a powerful tool in our foreign policy repertoire. It is, therefore, imperative that we continue to work on perfecting our ability to conduct NEO. As the United States moves toward greater interagency cooperation across the range of military operations, advances in this capability will translate to successes elsewhere. Though the evacuation of Lebanon may have been an extraordinary success at the macro level, future crises may be less forgiving due to location, threat, tempo, or a host of other factors. The United States Departments of State and Defense must learn from the past so that the United States of America does not risk failure in future missions.

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